(c) if so, by when Government would reconsider its stand for declaring chalk as a minor mineral?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) to (c) State Government of Gujarat had sent a proposal for declaring Chalk as a minor mineral. After examining the proposal, the Central Government has decided that in the interest of scientific and systematic development of mineral chalk, it should continue to be classified as a major mineral.

Grant of mining lease to Arcelor Mittal

245. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Arcelor Mittal has been allotted a Mining Lease (ML) in Meghahatuburu, Karampada RF (Jharkhand) over an area of 500 acres, for mining of Iron Ore, Manganese Ore and other associated minerals;

(b) if so, what is the capacity of the Meghahatuburu mine with respect to geological and mineable reserve;

(c) whether SAIL has been operating an iron ore mine for the last forty years; and

(d) if so, the reasons for granting the ML to Arcelor Mittal, in preference to SAIL?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) On a proposal received from the State Government of Jharkhand seeking prior approval of the Central Government under Section 5(1) of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, the Ministry of Mines has conveyed prior approval on the 5th June, 2008 for grant of mining lease for iron ore and manganese ore over an area of 500 acres in Meghahatuburu (Karampada R.F) in West Singhbhum district of Jharkhand in favour of M/s Arcelor Mittal India Ltd. for a period of 30 years.

(b) As informed by the State Government of Jharkhand, the 500 acres area approved for grant of mining lease to M/s Arcelor Mittal India Ltd. contains geological reserves of 10 million tonnes of iron ore.

(c) SAIL has been operating other iron ore mines in the State of Jharkhand.

(d) The area was notified for grant by the State Government and SAIL, M/s Arcelor Mittal and 103 other applicants applied for the lease. The State Government recommended M/s Arcelor Mittal for grant of mining lease as per the provision of Section 11(2) read with Section 11(3) of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 on the grounds that M/s Arcelor Mittal India Ltd. has signed an MoU with the State Government of Jharkhand for commissioning 12 Million Tonne Per Annum capacity Integrated Steel Plant in two phases alongwith Captive Power Plant, Township and Water Supply Infrastructure in the State Government with an investment of Rs. 40,000 crore.